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REVIEWS

The Source and Aim of Human Progress. By BORIS SIDIS. Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1919. Pp. 63. \$1.50.

The main thesis of Professor Sidis' work is, in his own words, that "the source and aim of true human progress are the cultivation and development of man's self-ruling, rational, free individuality." The corollary to this thesis is stated in his answer on how to overcome all of the great obstacles to human progress, "human sufferings, virulent mental epidemics, and other severe social maladies." His reply is that there is only one possible scientific answer based upon biology, sociology, and social psychology, namely: "Fortify the resistance of the individual by freedom of individuality and by the full development of personality. Immunize the individual against social, mental plagues by the full development of his rational reflective self, controlling the suggestible, automatic subconscious with its reflex consciousness. Put no barriers to man's self-expression, lay no chains on man, put no taboos on the human spirit."

The whole spirit of this interesting work fraternizes strikingly with the spirit of such a book as Brooks Adams' *Theory of Social Revolutions*. In one sense it is distinctly pessimistic—in its emphasis upon mob suggestibility, the prevalence of fear taboos, the hysteria of war, the reversion of society to primitive types, the crushing influence of institutionalizing, fear of over-legislation and government. While Professor Sidis ascribes the impetus to this book to his master, William James, he might well have added also a more or less unconscious inspiration and impetus from Herbert Spencer, for although Spencer's name is kept in the background his spirit is certainly present throughout the book.

While the author's emphasis is constantly upon the function of the individual in his contrasting of mass and class, and in his depreciation of mere bigness and boosting, yet it is not an apology of the crasser sort for the superman, à la Nietzsche. It is primarily a demand for members of a social order who have learned to inhibit their lower emotional and suggestible selves in order to give freer play to the selective, critical "voice and will" centers, an individualism that is not stifled by social suppression, an individualism that can hold fast its faith against the

"hysterical convulsions of mob-frenzies" or the "maniacal, nationalistic excitement with fixed paranoid delusions of national grandeur, demoniacal obsessions of world-dominion, resulting in homicidal and suicidal world-wars."

The second part of the book and the part which probably meets more nearly the crying need of these postbellum times includes the sections given over to upholding the value of freedom of opinion. The true value of an opinion, the author says, is not so much in its truth as in its freedom. The reviewer takes the same attitude. While he does not agree with either all the applications of biology and psychology, nor with all of the *obiter dicta* which are voiced in this book, he has felt a distinct stimulus of thought from it, and appreciates the freshness with which the author's opinions and scientific convictions are stated.

ARTHUR J. TODD

CHICAGO

The Philosophy of Conflict and Other Essays in War Time. By HAVELOCK ELLIS. Boston: The Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919. Pp. vi+299. \$2.50.

This collection of essays offers still further proof of the author's versatility. They cover a wide range of subjects, but while they differ on the score of profundity and length, all are marked by the same brilliancy of style and encyclopedic knowledge to which we have grown accustomed in this stimulating Englishman. Some of the essays cover a field of *belles lettres* somewhat remote from the social technician's everyday world, but the larger number of them are well within the scope of either theoretical or applied sociology. The title essay is by no means the best in the series, nor to the reviewer does it appear that the half-dozen essays treating more or less of the subject of war and civilization seem to measure up with those relating to the biological aspects of society with which we have associated the author's name for so long. Thus the essays on "Eugenics in Relation to the War," "Birth Control and Eugenics," "The Mind of Woman," "Equal Pay for Equal Work," "Psycho-Analysis in Relation to Sex," attain the highest mark in the whole volume, for they really add both new material and fresh, stimulating points of view to previous discussions of these subjects. For sheer pleasure, however, should be recommended the essay on the great South American man of letters, Rodó, for both this Latin genius and his English reviewer challenge to a certain extent the complacency of our North American utilitarian life. This might be summarized in the